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CHOSEN POEMS
OF
PEGRAM DARGAN

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A. H. BULLEN
LONDON & STRATFORD-UPON-AVON
MCMXIV

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NOW doth the gallant Spring
Publish in many a leaf,
Mocking old Time, the thief
Of every mortal thing;

Her Winter comes as soon,
And all her glory 's past,
In one Autumnal waste
Her every leaf down blown!

But, for all that, she says,
'When comes 'round the season,
Though it be 'gainst reason,
I must seek the bays!'

Then, Muse, awake with Spring!
And, though it be beneath
The very throne of Death,
We'll dare awhile to sing!

CUPID BLIND

WHY, why, repine at pleasures flown?
'Tis but the glass run out,
And we can call again each one
By turning it about!

'Doth age then take no interest up?
May we live on, and yet
Eat still the pie and drain the cup,
As we'd ne'er drunk or eat?'

Yes, yes, I think to-morrow is
But another day like this;
For, till those stars have left thine eyes,
Cupid will ne'er have his;

And, being blind, how can he see
Old wrinkles when they come?
And I'll not tell him, sweet, till he
Hath stumbled on a tomb!

ON COUNTRY LIFE

NOT witty enough to play the fool,
Not wise enough to go astray,
Ne'er once so hot as need to cool:
They naturally take 'the narrow way';
Are good because 'tis hard to sin,
To be a rogue is quite above 'em;
Temptation throws but one look in,
And hopeless grows to ever move 'em:
Exempted thus from every evil,
Where Sloth is mightier than the Devil!

THE ROGUE

WHILE others only steal the ear,
Or prisoner take the eye,
She steals far deeper, and with her
The heart itself doth fly;

Yet, who 'd complain were fool, indeed,
Or has in love small art;
For he, who has not lost his head,
May soon have back his heart!

THE REPLY

COME, tell me not of war,
I have no fighting fever;
I pledge the gentlest star,
And that is Venus ever!

In war you're in a hurry,
You mean to waste and kill;
I like to pluck the berry
And leave the stalk stand still;

Yet, think you not much braver,
For I have done more far:
I've lost the heart I gave her,
And you've not yet a scar!

ON A SUN-DIAL, PEMBROKE CHURCHYARD (BERMUDA)

STEAL softly, Time! thy foot is near
What all must feel; yes, even thou
At last must to this silence bow—
For whom what eye will drop a tear?

The hours doth this dial mark
Are naught to them that sleep below;
But to the passer this will show
How fast he hasteth—let him hark!

Steal softly, Time! even as I speak
The shadow changes on the disc:
Shall I another moment risk,
Without amends?—go in and seek!

THE CEDAR-WORKER

THRO' bark and bole he gropes his way,
To find his soul that lies beneath it:
(So doth the poet with his lay,
So doth the potter with his clay)
While all the while a song goes with it.

As resurrection moving death,
The magic of his cunning thrives;
Till, livelier growing at each breath,
At last the dead thing lives!

And, lo! before your eye appears
A god, or goddess—choose you which:
You smile and pass, I pause (who errs?)
And what within his heart he bears,
I bear off, stranger, to a niche!

MOORE'S FAREWELL TO BERMUDA.*

FAERY Isles! blissful Isles!
Lilied land and livid ocean,
Where all Heaven above you smiles
Like a lover in devotion!

Jeweled wave and bowered strand!
Where freed Ariel ever plays,
Having finished each command
Which old Prosper on him lays:

Tho' my canvas wing should bear me
To the furthest shore of all,
And tho' other sights would cheer me,
And tho' other voices call,

Still wherever I be going,
And whatever scenes I view,
As the waves around you flowing,
Will my thoughts encircle you!

* It is to be deplored that Moore composed no adieu to Bermuda. I have attempted to supply the deficiency.

Not a breeze that blows above ye
But a sigh from me will bring;
For there's naught on earth can move me
Like yon fluttering canvas wing!

Faery Isles! blissful Isles!
I must bid you now adieu;
But, by Heaven above you smiles,
I have left my heart with you!

AT THE CONFLUENCE OF THE NANTAHALA AND LITTLE TENNESSEE

I cried to Cupid, as he past,
'Stay, master! nor be in such haste;
Of thy votary, true and tried,
Hear the suit, and it decide:
Round about the world you've gone,
Parts to me and Sol unkown
You have visited; advise
Him that on your skill relies:
He, such thing has never found,
By thy judgment will be bound.
Tell me where at last I'll find
Such a place as hits my mind,
Such a place as you and your mother
Would have; for such I'd have, no other.'
When the little trembling god
Stilled himself as best he could;
Bade me follow as he fled,
And 'tis hither he has led:
'*Where these waters wed*,' says he,
'Suits a god, and should suit thee':
And with Cupid I agree.

TO FRANKLIN IN A FOG

POOR, paltry town! how mean you show,
Compared with yon bright skies, you know;
So hide yourself in mists below!
How can my Delia in you live,
And not more lustre to you give?
Poor, paltry town! in days to come
Thy fame shall be my Delia's tomb:
The rest, that Dargan thro' thee rode,
And cursed thy manners and thy mud.

ON A CUP OF MOUNTAIN DEW

THIS is the thing they say
Will make a man believe,
The Devil's in his pay,
And he can Hell deceive!

This is the drink that all,
Have tasted, say is such
Will make the *pale-face* call
On Indian wives too much.

To every red-shawl then
Let every man drink deep;
Till the cock has called his hen
No thoughts have we of sleep!

A night we mean to make it,
Although it cost us dear;
And he dislikes can take it
Where Balaam took his mare!—
'*Where Balaam took his mare!*' I say,
They all can take their chat,
Who cannot tell *straight up*, so pray
The wrong way when they're flat!

For virtue's proper path,
So straight, and hard and narrow,
To-night we'll dare the wrath,
And go to heaven to-morrow!—
To-morrow, to-morrow,
We'll go to Heaven to-morrow!
To-night we'll drink our cares away,
And go to Heaven to-morrow!

But, hear, the cocks are crowing,
And hastens in the day;
And we must soon be going:
One more—and then away!

And now we're roaring, glorious,
And for the cost who cares?
The bark of dogs can't worry us:
Let bitches prick up ears!

Then hurrah for the Nantahala!
Hurrah for the round world too!
Wherever a fellow gets mellow
On a cup o' the moutain dew!

ON AN OREGON FOREST

THE only wonders of the world are these :
Ocean, the heavens, thunder, mountains
and these trees !
Here safely had the primal parents erred,
They could not have been found or seen or
heard
Nor ever shame unto the pair occurred ;
Where Deity itself is quite absurd :
Here Cæsar had spoke Greek, as I speak
Latin,
Satan forgot Hell, and Milton Satan !

INSCRIPTION FOR THE HAGUE COURT

THIS is where all fools may see
How their follies may agree;
Yet each fool be satisfied
He had reason on his side.

MAÑANA

I begged her for a kiss, she said,
'*Mañana—si, Señor;*'
And when to-morrow came she did
The same thing as before:

Which means, in English, that she lied,
Yet seemed she never could;
And still so sweetly she denied,
I always thought she would.

And tho' 'mañana' never came,
So charming was the sorrow,
That, tho' it always was the same,
I lived but for to-morrow!

LOVE'S DILEMMA

KITTY flies when I pursue her,
But she dies when I give o'er;
That to do I know not what,
Alike afraid of this and that:
Or to leave her, or fly to her,
Is to make my pain the more.

Kitty finds as much distress,
With her fortune still at odds:
If she longs to be at rest,
Still she fears to make me blest:
Never 'no' and never 'yes'!—
All our help lies with the gods:

As she dies, as she flies,
Help us, all you deities!

THE ART OF ARTS

BELIEVE me, but for its good liars,
The world would be one bed of briars:
A little oil on the tongue,
And all goes well, had else gone wrong.

THE ONE RULE

WHEN I was fond and foolish,
And she was young and gay,
There was but one sweet rule which
We did not disobey :—
'Twas kiss those hours away!

Old Herrick says to gather
The rose-buds while we may,
Ere rough and wintry weather
Takes all those buds away,
Was wise even in his day.

But now that I grow wiser,
And she is not so gay,
How else would you advise her,
If you were forced to say,—
But kiss such hours away?

LINES SUGGESTED ON VIEWING A RUINED WALL

WHO has not seen that smile that creeps upon
The tortured lips when they grow cold and wan?
As tho' an Angel, flying o'erhead,
Had downward cast his shadow on the dead!
So Ruin seems akin to Death in this:
To, ofttimes, fairer make what he doth kiss:
Even ills oft turn to goods, when once resigned
To memory—the ruins of the mind;
And Present, turned the Past, we still recall
Wearing a graceful moss, like yonder wall.

GREAT BOSTON, HAIL!

BLEST Eden of make-shifts and make-believes,
Of grasping Adams and of graceless Eves;
Whose daughters wear, yet wonder what is, lace,
(And even the grace of God seems out of place!)
Whose sons if erring, erring never know it;
Without the sense that would to others show it:
Caught in a pinch, or caught in a minority,
They call on God, and straight have a majority!
Impervious to censure, right or wrong,
The feeling of perception is so strong.
All hail, New England! and great Boston, hail!
The Hub will turn when all the feloes fail.
... Great home of doctors, nurses wet and dry,
Of Wendells, Garrisons, and all the fry
Would make black white, although they'd prove a lie;
Tough-breasted breeder of the satchel-bearers,
Of bards, slave-traders and school-teaching terrors,

Of statesmen silent and of spinsters dumb,
Of true religion and Jamaica rum:
Foremost in error, always short or long,
The wrong foot first in fact, or but in song;
Where prudence' searching east wind ever blows,
Where pens are icicles and verse is prose,
From Heavenly Mather's down to H. Thoreau's!
From Biglow bosh to learned Harvard odes,
Where never mouse appears but first an Alp explodes!
Where Richard's Almanac for Homer passes,
Where thrift is glory and distinction glasses;
Where all's esteemed that elsewhere is condemned,
And all's condemned that elsewhere is esteemed;
Where love means but more patches, cleaner floors,
And seventh day prayers but only seventh day chores;
Where history means one varnished commonplace,
Scarce touched by grandeur, romance, love or grace,

But veriest minutiæ, negligible
Elsewhere, and only here not thought a trifle;
Where heart means nothing, for there is no heart,
Where art means nothing, for there is no art,
Save what may trim a grandson's sprouting thumb
To match the head-stone at his grandsire's tomb!
Exceptional in virtue, vice and diet,
Know thou art right, tho' all the world deny it!
Should Wit, like Emin, cut thro' thee a rout,
Still Caution would, like Stanley, pull him out!
Such is New England, such New Englanders:
The world may err, but never son of hers!

WHAT were renowned Penelope,
Or Helen and her pride?
They knew not of Theosophy,
Kissed, loved and eat and died,
Were fooled by Cupid, fooled by men,
And living would be fooled again.

But now, the folly of it is,
The women have grown so nice
They will not do, they will not kiss,
But that we first seem wise—
A hard thing yet for us to do,
Especially then when we woo.

Minerva rules where Venus swayed,
And all for heads are married;
And Boston calls her still a maid
Whose wits have not miscarried:
The only shame is being caught,
Not now with baby, without thought.

SONNET TO THE SEX

WAS nature made to practise virtue on?
God help us what is virtue if not nature's?
'Tis but another sort of a mad-stone,
That madder makes its masters than its creatures:
Were Heaven filled with saints, who'd seek out Heaven?
'Tis the 'lost souls,' like villains in a play,
That make attractive bliss to six in seven:
As the six days make pleasant the seventh day.
The Ten Commandments are but a cosmetic
To 'slicken up' old nature for the gods:
To paint the lily 's to be too poetic,
And she 's polite enough toward Heaven that nods—
To stir her blood, and make her too quite civil,
Each woman needs a lover or the devil.

THE COMFORTABLE DAME

I LOVED a comfortable dame,
Of no especial beauty;
She knew not Homer from a ham,
Or Helen from plain Hetty;
But she could make up beds and sew,
And cook to suit the preacher;
Had a good fat hand, the one, you know,
That proves a butter maker;

She knew just how to feed a cow,
Wouldn't give her fodder to dry her;
Could sit a horse, and make him go,
Without a lackey by her;
Could call my dogs, each by his name,
Knew the hen she shouldn't kill, too;
O the praises of just such a dame
Would leave my goose no quill, too!

Confound it all! there was but one
Bless'd thing at which to cavil:
She was not comfortable on
The subject of the Devil!

Now a woman's *past*, my word upon't,
But proves the timber seasoned;
But a woman with a 'future' won't
Do for the time that 's *present!*

ON FORTUNE

STILL Fortune, like a woman, smiles
On him 's unfrightened by her wiles;
With purpose of that feeble sex
And to find aught she cannot vex:
Such constancy once let her find,
Than Fortune naught more true and kind.

VOILA TOUT!

HERE'S to the girl fled at a glance,
And like the ice uncracked is;
And here's to her that took a chance,
And always kept in practice;

And here's to the lad that never would,
Until the parson bad him;
And here's to him that never could
Quit, till the sheriff had him.

Lift up to both: it takes the two
To make the world we live in;
Nor matters which class I or you
Belong to, or believe in:

The saints or sinners—'just, unjust';
For who can pick the winner?
When, like the rain, descends the dust
On key-cold saint and sinner!

ON THE FIRE IN THE ALEXANDRIAN LIBRARY

GOOD God! behold the monarch how he strides:
Here snuffs a king and there a queen divides;
O'er Homer's sentences he can not scan
Draws one red flourish, like an idiot man;
Thumbs Zeno but an instant, Euclid damns:
Each gives one glance and then to all gives flames;
As when old Jupiter unto Semele brought
His golden fires, and as she kissed she caught!
A blazing Proteus, and all shapes assuming,
He meets himself, astonished, two ways coming;
A ruin himself, he on himself must fall,
And only lives Destruction through it all.
Puffed up with wit, the flaming ruffian grows
As wildly frolic as a drunken Muse,
Burns in more shapes than ever fire yet knew,
While to poetic madness all is due;
Now like a cloud grows thick, as 'twere unlearnt,
And straight we know some heavy sophist 's burnt;

Rises again on superhuman wings,
And straight we know 'tis Sappho flaming sings!
Through all shapes onward like a player goes,
And yet 's reality in all he does:
Now rolls a serpent, now a fury stalks;
Roars like a bully, now a harlot talks;
Shrinks, then, as full of wild audacity,
Like Samson grappling, leaves the empty sky:
Flat on his face, like to old Dagon knocked,
The hellish monster writhes, with learning choked!

THE FAITHFUL LOVER

O NEVER think that I could turn away,
But, as Lot's wife, the more with thee to stay;
That every step from thee should be
A monument of constancy;

O never think my love will cool,
Or lazy grow like pampered fowl:
The more the gods of nectar drink
The less inclin'd they are to wink;

No, never fear; though Fate me force
From Love elect a different course,
Still I'm that fly 'round candle turns,
And, as away he flies, he burns!

ON A FAIR WENCH A FOOL

AS oft by goods set 'fore a shop,
We here are led too much to hope:
The whole stock out of door is seen,
And 'tis lost time to go within.

HYMEN'S CALENDAR: OR, WHEN TO MARRY

YOUNG men early,
Young maids rarely;
Old folks never,
Prime folks ever;
The gay widow when she can,
And the old maid any man:
But, the merry bachelor,
Let him do it if he dare!

EPITAPH ON A DEBTOR

STRIKE out the naughts from his account,
The digits come to no great amount:
He thought in millions but performed in tens,
And still 'to-morrow' was to-day's defence;
Now, there 's no to-morrow left, what will he do?
Why, roundly bid Death, no doubt, 'Be damned and sue!'

TO 'JUNO':

ON HER PRESENTING HIM WITH A FEATHER PILLOW

FULL harsh the sea-bird's breast to me,
Though wanton winds do often choose it;
Alack! sweet love, the thought of thee
What but thy bosom can repose it?

Would Jove on Juno's breast forego
To drowse on heaps of honied roses?
Though Cupid fanned them with his bow,
I' faith, methinks the god refuses!

Then think me not to cheat so well,
As that with feathers I'll be trading;
Or, if thou wilt, a kiss may sell;
But put in that and I'll be lading:

Else do I hold it for a feather,
Soon blown away in love's rude weather!

THE griefs of the widow lie in the tomb,
The maid's lie in her eye;
The good wife's are thick as the straws in her broom,
And the grandam's never dry;

The wifeless wag thinks he 's undone,
The yoked ox feels the gall;
The youngster starts at his mistress' frown,
And the old Jack at a shawl!

THE END

AND is it then all right,
Or, is it then all wrong?
I do not yet know quite;
So I'll end it in a song:

For beauty fails and dies,
And love an hour lasts;
And time as fast too flies,
And of his own doom tastes;

Then while we can let 's cry,
Ho, fetch, boy, fetch some wine!
For here 's the only sky
Where the sun doth ever shine!

Then up! lift up! here 's a lip
That never is quite dry;
And when you long to sip
Will never kiss deny!

DATE DUE

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